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CAPL MARVEL

JAUNT ON JUPITER

A Jon Jarl Adventure

By EANDO BINDER

T WO ships spun through space at drumming out orange flame. The ship ahead was that of Bull Drago, notorious outlaw. The ship pursuing was that of Lieutenant Jon Jarl of the Space Police,

"I'm gaining on him." Jon Juri muttered grimly, but then he frowned. Ahead lay the huge blacted globe of the Planet Jupiter, the giant world of the solar system. Drago's ship turned down toward it, zooming into the thick swirling atmosphere. It was his eac chance to escape.

To dove down after him, but a dense purpte i could by below. When Jon samerged irom that, Drago's ship was not him to be a straight of the second straight of the large straight of the second straight of the large straight of the second straight of the large straight of the second straight of the world, and what a world 1 jupier's surtace areas was Sol integ that the second world, and what a world 1 jupier's surtace areas was Sol integ that the second straight of the second

All other measurements and dimensions on Jupiter were of this Brohlingnzign proportion. Jon crossed a continent and his instruments recorded it as 100.000 miles long, four times the whole trip around Earth. Then Jon came to the degle of a vast ocean that seemed never to end. It was so hunge that if the Earth were dropped into its center, it would sink without a trace and only a ripple would reach shore.

Jon passed an island in this gigantic ocean. The "island" was twice as big as Asia on Earth. Jon had the feeling that he was just a tiny ant on this tremendous oversized planet.

And where was Bull Drago? Jon might search for half his life and still never find him--if he had hidden in some remote corner of this mighty world. Jon kept on doggedly, but without hope.

Jon passed mountains. Mountains was a pitiful name for them. The lowest peak was at least 50 miles high. One peak seached 100 miles into the hazy atmosphere and Jon had to dart upward sharply to avoid collision.

Cruising aimlessly over endless plains, Jon was suddenly startled to see a small space ship parked below. Did it belong to Bull Drago? Jon zoomed down for a landing. But then he noticed it was a differenhip. And that a shack was beside it.

Jon gasped. Did some Earthman live there on Jupiter?

Jon landed and stepped out with a breathing-helmet over his head. The air of Jupiter contained poisons which no Earthman could breathe. That was why it was so strange to think of any Earthman choosing to live here.

The moment Jon stepped from his ship, another phenomenon of Jupiter took hold of him-the great gravity. It was almost three times that of earth. Jon weighed about 500 pounds here. In fact, he sagged to his knees, taken unawares, and it was only with,a powerful effort that he could straighten up to his feet, feeling as if he carried a mountain on his shoulders.

That was reason number two why Earthmen avoided colonizing Jupiter!

Jon groaned with every step toward the shack. His legs felt like lumps of cement and just to lift them up and down was sheer work. Beads of sweat stood out on his forehead by the time he reached the door and stepped in.

A man lay on a matted couch. He barely kited his head in greeting. "Well, well, a fellow Earthman!" he grunted. "Come in, come in! Excuse me if I don't rise, but it's too much effort. Lie down. That's the only way to keep comfortable here."

Jon noticed another couch nearby and thankfully sank down on it, casing back his aching body. He lay there panting for a minute. It had only been 100 feet from his ship to the shack, but Jon felt as if he had hiked all day and half the night.

"GUESS you're curious about me," went on the host. "I'm Matt Benton, prospector. The reason I'm here on

Jupiter is because I struck it rich. I've been here three years." "Three years?" Jon was amazed. "You

"Three years?" Jon was amazed. "You mean you've put up with this horrible (Please turn to next page)

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gravity for three long years? How could you stand it?"

"By taking it easy," Benton returned simply. "I spend most of my time just relaxing on this couch. I only move when I have to. It isn't so bad that way."

Jon was puzzled. "But you said you struck it rich. So how do you get your work done, lying on a couch?"

"The natives do all the work," Benton explained. "They bring in lumps of virgin osmium to me. Osmium is a rare and valuable metal on Earth."

"But why do the natives work for you?" Ion asked, "What do you pay them with?" "Salt," returned Benton. "Plain old salt. Salt is rare on Jupiter, and to the natives it seems to taste like candy or something. Anyway, they easerly bring in osmium for salt. Once a month I fly to Ganymede and return with a load of salt for them."

He waved to a corner of the shack and Jon saw the piled up sacks of common salt. Next to them lay several sturdy chests of steel. The lid of one was open and Ion saw the lumps of dull white metal in them.

"Quite a nice set-up," smiled Benton. "I've got enough osmium collected now to retire rich for life. I'm going to leave here soon for good. That osmium is worth at least a million dollars and . . .'

66 VOU don't say?" came a new voice from the door. It was Bull Drago himself, his dark face sinister as he pointed a ray gun at them

Jon jerked up, his hand moving. "Don't try it, copper!" warned the outlaw. "Don't reach for your gun. You may have the fastest draw on other worlds, but not here on Jupiter!"

Ion realized he was right. The dragging gravity would make his draw so clumsy and slow that Drago could shoot him ten times over. Drago walked over, took Jon's gun, and stuffed it in his belt.

Benton seemed undismayed by the grim event. "I suppose you've come to rob me of my osmium?"

Drago nodded, leering. "I heard about your buying salt and bringing it to Jupiter, and I guessed the rest. After escaping from the space cop there. I decided to rob vou before leaving Jupiter. And if you try to stop me, Benton, I'll . .

Benton waved a lax hand, "Take it away," he said. "In this gravity, I should try to jump and stop you? Too much work."

Ion was puzzled. Benton seemed almost gay about it. He had spent three grualling years on this world to collect his treasure. and then seemed not in the least concerned when a bandit took it all.

Drago worked fast as a dozen natives arrived with more osmium. At the point of a gun, using space patois, he ordered them to take away the chests of osmlum. No Earthman could lift even a corner. But the powerful natives, with thick legs and mighty arms, easily hoisted the boxes.

Drago turned for a mocking farswell. "My ship is just over the hill," he gloated. "I'll be gone in a few minutes. Thanks for the loot, Benton."

"Not at all," Benton returned without getting up.

But when Drago left, Jon was on his feet angrily. "He's not going to get away with this," he yelled. "I'll follow him to his ship, even if he has got my gun." "Relax," said Benton, "Stop worrying ..." Jon shook off his hand. "You're crazy,

Benton," he growled. "You let a crook take your fortune without a protest. But I'm going after him."

Jon trailed the party over the hill. Jon tried to run, but it was impossible. He could only stagger along at slow speed.

Drago reached his ship in plenty of time, and the natives dumped in the chests of osmium. The rocket motor roared to life and the ship trembled. Jon was too far off to do anything at all. Drago would soar away with a million dollars of loot.

But Drago's ship did not move. It trembled and vibrated and strained to go, but it stood still as if rooted to the spot. Drago roared his motor to top speed. At last the ship rose upward a few feet.

And then-the bottom of his space ship dropped right out!

As Ion stood over Bull Drago, who had been thrown out heavily and lay stunned, the figure of Matt Benton leisurely strolled up grinning.

"I told you not to worry," he said to Jon. "You see, osmium is the heaviest metal known. Drago didn't realize that he could never take off from Jupiter with such an overloaded ship! That's why the bottom dropped out.

"The joke was on him," grinned Ion.

ATER, as Ion stepped into his own LATER, as Jon support as his prisoner, Benton made a last request. "Send a ship to pick up me and my osmium, Lieutenant. But make sure it's the most powerful ship available !" THE END

Follow the exciting adventures of ION JARL in the future every month in APTAIN MARVEL ADVENTURES









































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